Sl. No.	State/UT	2003	2004
21.	Maharashtra	19665	32788
22.	Manipur	NA	NA
23.	Meghalaya	0	89
24.	Mizoram	1305	0
25.	Nagaland	NA	NA
26.	Orissa	153	274
27.	Pondicherry	NA	NA
28.	Punjab	55025	56763
29.	Rajasthan	NA	NA
30.	Sikkim	0	1470
31.	Tamil Nadu	103440	19019
32.	Tripura	1902	671
33.	Uttar Pradesh	10355	13139
34.	Uttaranchal	NA	NA
35.	West Bengal	NA	2499
	TOTAL	317814	460206

Personal attendance for submission of passport application

2562. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made personal attendance mandatory for presentation of application for passports and collection thereof;

(b) if so, the details of the revised arrangement and the reason therefor;

(c) whether keeping in view difficulties of the people , Government would consider entrusting the job to the licensed agents; and

(d) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) The Government has not made

personal attendance mandatory for submission of applications for passport or collection thereof. As per the existing policy, an applicant has the option to submit the application for a fresh passport or renewal thereof through an authorised agent/ representative . In the case of first issue of passport, it is sent by post at the address given by the applicant, unless he wishes to collect it in person.

(c) As per the guidelines issued by the Government, which are in effect from 1.8.2000, all travel agents who were recognised by the Government between 1986 and 23.7.1992 and the travel agents who are registered with IATA (International Air Transport Association) and are members of either TAAI (Travel Agents Association of India) of TAFI (Travel Agents Federation of India) are allowed to submit passport application forms to the concerned Passport officers.

(d) Not applicable.

Appointment of Tamil knowing High Commissioners in Singapore and Malaysia

2563. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Tamils are in association with Singapore and Malaysia for more than 150 years and Tamil language had been given official language status there, whereas the Ministry never seems to have given any weightage at all in appointing Tamil knowing High Commissioners in these countries with the result the local Tamils have no local rapport at all with our High Commissions;and

(b) whether in the light of trade and commerce for which top priority being given, would there be a move hereafter to appoint Tamil knowing High Commissioners in these countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) The Government is fully aware of the presence of the people of Indian origin, including Tamil speaking, settled in Singapore and Malaysia as well as official recognition of Tamil language in these countries. Our Missions in these countries have always maintained a close rapport with all sections of the Indian Diaspora.